DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 369 077 CS 214 274

AUTHOR Huff, W. A. Kelly
TITLE Perspectives on Your Chances for Journal Publication.
PUB DATE Nov 93
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (79th, Miami Beach, FL, November 18-21, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Graduate Students; Higher Education; *Professional Development; Publications; *Scholarly Journals; Scholarship; *Writing for Publication
IDENTIFIERS *Professional Concerns; Professional Meetings; Scholarly Writing

ABSTRACT

If his or her manuscript is carefully prepared and the prospective journal judiciously selected, the graduate student will find the publishing process fulfilling and professionally valuable. Submitting papers to conventions is a good place to start, particularly if the convention specifically requests debut papers, papers written by those who have not previously presented a paper at that particular convention. Students should revise their work based on the suggestions of their professors and those attending the convention. Eventually, they may submit it to an appropriate journal, one whose purpose, mission, focus, and degree of competitiveness is suited to the student's work. Finally, graduate students should take rejection in stride, and with minimal revision, resubmit their paper to another journal. (TB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 369 077

PERSPECTIVES ON YOUR CHANCES FOR JOURNAL PUBLICATION

A paper presented to a panel entitled

"For Grad Students Only:
Perspectives in Publishing . . . We Also Perish"

Sponsored by the
Senior College and University Section

Speech Communication Association

Miami, FL
November 1993

by

W.A. Kelly Huff, Ph.D.

Department of Communication
University of South Alabama
Mobile, AL 36688
(205) 380-2800

CS214274

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

W. Huff

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PERSPECTIVES ON YOUR CHANCES FOR JOURNAL PUBLICATION

Graduate students who are preparing for careers in higher education often face with equivocation the seemingly imposing task of "publish or perish." However, aspiring young faculty members need not be so intimidated. Scholarly work can be a pleasant experience, as it well should be. The purpose here is to offer suggestions which might help young scholars more easily achieve their research goals and expectations, particularly in regard to successful publishing in journals.

Convention papers

A good place to begin a successful scholarly career is with convention papers. Frequently, convention papers evolve into journal articles. As a graduate student, one can write papers for classes which eventually may be published in a scholarly journal. With the assistance of professors, one's better work can be selected for revision and submission. Further, professors can be called on to make valuable suggestions for improving manuscripts, and they can offer insightful suggestions about which association may be the most appropriate outlet for submission and for possible presentation. Appropriate considerations include the general bent of the organization. Is its scope international, national, regional, state, or other? Is the organization's focus on speech, journalism, electronic media, public relations, etc.? Typically, most academic associations have numerous divisions, sections, or interest groups which solicit papers to be presented at annual conferences. Often,

there is a great deal of overlap. For example, the *Speech Communication Association* (SCA) and *Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication* (AEJMC) sound relatively different, but they do share common divisions, such as public relations. General divisions, such as AEJMC's "Mass Communication and Society" or SCA's "Mass Communication," accept a wide variety of topics and research methods. Overall, the SCA is not limited to "speech" topics, but the *Broadcast Education Association* is a radio and television organization. Again, this is where experienced faculty can provide a great deal of insight. Even more importantly, many of the subgroups in academic organizations specifically ask for student submissions, or debut papers. Debut papers are those authored by persons who have not previously presented a paper at that association's meeting. Some students prefer to bypass these avenues in favor of competitive panels open to all entries. The idea is that to be the best, one must be judged along with the best. The first few times out, however, one should probably be more interested in confidence-building than competition.

Convention papers offer a young or experienced scholar an opportunity to share ideas and to receive feedback which is valuable in working toward a journal publication. One should maximize the effort by getting the most mileage out of the venture. Submit a manuscript to a convention, revise it, and then submit to a journal. Another benefit of convention papers is that they afford both experienced and developing scholars opportunities to meet others in their field. Conventions offer networking opportunities, and a forum to showcase one's talents to others. Often the regional and state meetings provide better opportunities for meeting colleagues than the major national

associations.

Know the journal

Another major step in building a successful publishing record is to become familiar with a variety of journals. One should research a journal as thoroughly as the topic to be submitted. This is similar to the investigative efforts outlined in deciding on an appropriate convention. Do not overlook smaller, less prominent journals, and do not disregard related fields of study. Also, find out the acceptance rate of various journals. To build confidence, one might initially submit articles to those publications which have higher acceptance rates. A young scholar should work up the ladder. Though there are success stories, few people experience beginner's luck in high profile, refereed journals. Success in less prominent journals will help one become experienced, and will also build confidence to take greater risks and challenges. Less prominent journals are also grateful to have quality manuscripts submitted. Most importantly, find a niche and build upon it. Update, expand, and build on a research topic. Again, much of this can be accomplished with convention papers. Perhaps the most important criteria to be applied in selecting a journal is to understand its purpose, mission, and focus. Once it is decided which journal is most appropriate for a particular piece, closely follow the stated patterns or guidelines. These can usually be found in each issue of the journal. Guidelines include maximum length, style (such as APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.), number of copies to submit and in what format (hard copy, computer disk, or both), computer program (if applicable), the person to whom the article will be sent, and deadline for submissions. One would also benefit by perusing copies of the journal. Every little detail may give the article an edge,

particularly if the editor is making a borderline decision. Observed patterns of a journal may include average number of pages published, title structure (brief, complicated, subtitles), frequently occurring topics, and any tendency toward qualitative or quantitative methods. It is also important to note the nature of typical articles. Such as, are the articles on historical, current, or emerging topics? Are articles based on theory, education, skills, or analysis, or some combination?

Final preparations for submission

Prior to sending the article for review, proofread several times. Look for errors in typing, grammar, sentence structure, spelling, readability, and clarity of thoughts expressed. When satisfied, pass the article along to a trustworthy colleague for further proofreading. Choose someone who has experienced success publishing in the journal to which the submission is being made. Make certain that you will respect the person's comments and criticism. Also, choose someone who is sincerely interested in helping make the article better, one who will not merely give a half-glance and say it looks fine. Give thoughtful consideration to all feedback, but do not lose the individuality of your work. Every person has an opinion, so keep in mind that a reviewer is just one person and not an omnipotent being.

The judgment: Acceptance or rejection?

Obviously, the desired result is that a manuscript will be accepted and published. However, it is important to understand, and to come to grips with, the rejection. Rejection is inevitable. Do not take it personally. Often, one reviewer's criticism will directly contradict another's praise. If the journal is respectable, the

reviews from the judges will be included. Examine the comments, but do not necessarily change your work on the basis alone. One might refine an article, but typically the manuscript can be submitted to other journals without much revision other than style, format, or other simple changes. Author Burke Wilkinson suggested rejection may be positive, because it can be "the grain of sand in the oyster - the irritant which causes the oyster to make a pearl" (White, 1982).

A final word

Developing scholars need not be intimidated by the publication process. It is not as ominous as it may seem, and indeed it may serve as a way for exploring new frontiers, for satisfying one's curiosity, and for discovering new answers to a wealth of questions. Research and its resulting papers and publications are satisfying and fulfilling. Even the more prolific publishers in both the academic and popular press have faced similar obstacles in their careers. Anais Nin once said: "Beware of allowing a tactless word, a rebuttal, a rejection to obliterate the whole sky" (White, 1982).

REFERENCES

White, J. (1982). Rejection. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.